

**NATION FORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 13, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kennedy Martin** of **Nation Ford High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade South Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year**. Martin is the second Gatorade South Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Nation Ford High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Martin as South Carolina's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Martin joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Lexi Sun (2016-17, Santa Fe Christian School, Calif.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.), Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.) and April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-7 senior outside hitter amassed 604 kills and 239 digs this past season, leading the Falcons (29-10-1) to the Class AAAAA state quarterfinals. Martin also recorded 49 blocks, 40 service aces and 18 assists, posting a .535 kill percentage and a .388 hitting percentage on the attack. Martin played her freshman year at Nation Ford before spending the next two years playing high school volleyball in Wisconsin. She was a 2022 American Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-American selection and is ranked as the nation's No. 18 recruit in the Class of 2023 by PrepDig.com.

Martin has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Kennedy is a strong power-hitter and has versatility in roll shots and tips," said Bryan Piro, head coach of River Bluff High School. "She's a dangerous player to defend against."

Martin has maintained a weighted 4.74 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Florida this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Martin joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Volleyball Players of the Year Marianna Singletary (2021-22, Porter-Gaud School), Lauren McCutcheon (2020-21, J.L. Mann Academy), and Sophie Fischer (2019-20 & 2018-19, Nation Ford High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.